

know about SNAP and what the Agriculture Committee has discovered during our thorough review of the program; and that is, that current benefits averaging only a \$1.40 per person per meal are not enough to cover the cost of a healthy diet.

Drs. Mulik and Haynes-Maslow set out to explore how much it costs families to follow the MyPlate dietary guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and then estimated the additional resources families on SNAP would need to follow these recommendations for a healthy diet.

They discovered that a family of four with two adults and two children between the ages of 8 and 17 needed between \$1,109 and \$1,249 a month to follow USDA's recommendations for a healthy diet, including the time to prepare nutritious meals. The research found this type of family, a family of four with two older kids, would need an additional \$627 per month to eat a nutritious diet.

Overall, the research determined that current SNAP benefits only cover about 43 to 60 percent of the food budget needed to follow MyPlate recommendations. These findings underscore the need for Congress to protect SNAP and further expand access to nutritious food by increasing benefits. This is especially important as we continue to learn more about the negative health impacts exacerbated by hunger and a lack of access to nutritious food.

Unfortunately, some in this House have turned efforts to help our constituents put food on their table when times are tough into an ideological crusade and, quite frankly, it is unconscionable. Food ought to be a fundamental right for every single person.

Republicans on the House Agriculture Committee and in the Republican leadership of this House advanced a farm bill last month that would have done irreparable harm to our anti-hunger safety net. It relied on negative stereotypes and incorrect assumptions about the hardworking American families who rely on modest SNAP benefits. It would have slashed SNAP by \$23 billion, which would cause millions of Americans to see their benefits reduced or eliminated entirely.

And not only did this terrible bill single out those vulnerable adults who are having a difficult time finding stable employment, it also targeted working families, older adults, and children.

In the United States of America, the richest country in the history of the world, no person should go to bed hungry or wondering where his or her next meal is coming from. This Congress ought to be focused on helping our constituents with a hand up when times are tough, instead of demonizing the poor and ignoring their struggles.

Now, I am encouraged that the Senate Agriculture Committee is marking up a bipartisan farm bill today that protects SNAP from harmful cuts and makes investments in the program to help increase access to healthy foods.

My Republican friends in the House should follow their example.

As we continue through this year's farm bill process, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reject cuts to SNAP benefits and oppose efforts to reduce access to this critical food assistance program.

As research has long confirmed, SNAP helps to reduce food insecurity, promote access to nutritious foods, and improve health. We know that SNAP benefits must be increased to cover the costs associated with a nutritious diet. I encourage my colleagues to consider this important new information and to join me in working to end hunger now.

HONORING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM ALLEN KENDRICK, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of William Allen Kendrick, Jr., a Marine and lifelong resident of Jena, Louisiana, who died tragically on May 24.

Allen led a life driven by passion, patriotism, and faith, values he lived and expressed through music. He served as a bandsman in the Marine Corps for 8 years and brought his enthusiasm for music and theater back to civilian life in his hometown of Jena, a small rural community that I have the privilege to represent in my district.

Allen first discovered his love of music at Nolley Memorial United Methodist Church when he joined the Nolley group known as the Nolley Notables as a young student. As an adult, he created the Nolley Memorial UMC Grace Notes Choir and doubled the size of the LaSalle Parish Community Choir after becoming its director.

Not surprisingly, Allen incorporated his love for God and country in his music, and it showed when he performed the most notable arrangements during Independence Day, Memorial Day, and other veterans events.

He was also a member of the Jena Community Theater Group called Acting Up, and a former band director at Jena High School.

Allen shared a quote on his Facebook page that said: "Music is not what I do. It's who I am." He lived that life every day, and all of us who heard his music are better for it.

I join all those who have been blessed by Allen's music, and I mourn his passing, as does the community. It will be hard not to think of him the next time I attend a service in Jena, though I know that his legacy and his patriotism will forever be a special part of Jena and Louisiana and, hopefully, the Nation.

STOP PROSECUTING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND SEPARATING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, last week a group of about a dozen of us wrote a letter to the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and the Attorney General. We demanded that the Trump administration cease its practice of prosecuting asylum seekers, to reunite the children they separated from their families, and to allow Members of Congress to visit the facilities where the children are being held.

We gave these three Trump administration Cabinet Secretaries a deadline to get back to us, and so far we have heard nothing, not a peep. So now we are trying to figure out how to make it clear to the Trump administration that agencies taking children from the arms of moms and dads is absolutely 100 percent unacceptable to us and most Americans.

Let's look at what is going on here. In order to get more of you on that side of the aisle elected or re-elected, the President and his henchmen have devised an election-year strategy to be as mean and nasty as possible to asylum seekers, to immigrants, refugees, and Latinos in general.

The President, and the Attorney General, and others have said that this is a national security strategy, and that our national security depends on taking toddlers, infants, and children, most of whom are under the age of 12, away from their parents.

Come on, really? How does jailing a scared, frightened, terrorized 8 year old who barely escaped with her life from Central America, make any of us safer?

Well, it doesn't. The only person who might be safer because an 8-year-old child is in jail is a Member of the House running for re-election on a get-tough-on-immigration platform.

And it isn't like they are taking these children from their parents and putting them on the other side of the jail or the other side of the for-profit detention center. No, they are taking the toddler, the infant, the 8 or 9 year old and taking them to a government facility somewhere else, maybe in New York, Chicago, Seattle, thousands of miles away.

And we are hearing the most horrific stories. Parents who have had their children taken from them have committed suicide.

Imagine how you would feel if you had to walk from El Salvador to Texas to save the life of your son or daughter, only to wind up in detention. Now, imagine that a man in a uniform comes up to you and says, hey, we are going to take your child for a bath. We are going to take them to see the doctor. And then hours go by and you realize they are gone, maybe forever. Can you imagine?

Can you sit quietly and do nothing when that is how your tax dollars are being spent?

We are scarring these children for the rest of their lives. We know this. Taking children from their families and institutionalizing them at a young age

will have consequences for that child, and for this country, and our taxpayers, for the rest of their lives.

And we don't know for sure because none of the agencies have responded, but we hear that parents are going to court in mass trials and having their asylum claims denied—not heard, but denied—and then the parents are deported.

Does the government then go out and find the child in Chicago or Detroit, and send them back to their parents? Who knows? But probably not.

There is a certain devious and genuinely cruel kind of evil in separating a child from their mother. And they don't expect anyone on the Republican side of the aisle to say anything, because it is part of the strategy to help them keep their job.

Well, do you know what? Look, today, I am going to be joining with a group of hundreds of advocates from a diverse array of organizations, issues, and areas of this country, and we are going to demand answers.

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And it is just not LUIS GUTIÉRREZ, but my friend and ally, JOE CROWLEY. We will be together today at a rally at Freedom Plaza at 1:30 here in Washington, D.C., and JOE and I will have other Members, including some who signed that letter I talked about and got the ball rolling.

Because do you know what? We cannot sit back and let our government systematically ruin the lives of families and scar children for life. When we said “never again,” we meant it. Never again, and that means right here in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter to the Cabinet Secretary, signed by 11 Democrats, demanding that answers be placed in the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, June 8, 2018.

Hon. KIRSTJEN M. NIELSEN,
Secretary of Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JEFF SESSIONS,
Attorney General of the United States, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

Hon. ALEX M. AZAR II,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY NIELSEN, ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSIONS, AND SECRETARY AZAR: We write to express our strong and emphatic opposition to the recently announced decision to prosecute migrants and asylum-seekers, which is a reprehensible action that violates U.S. treaty obligations, due process, and the law. The consequence of this policy is that children are routinely taken from their parents, with tragic results. There are widespread reports of more than 11,000 migrant children already in custody of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and hundreds of children—nearly half younger than 12 years old detained in Border Patrol stations when the law requires they be transferred within 72 hours to HHS. Serious and legitimate concerns have been raised about the deep trauma such separations cause these children, the questionable conditions in which they are being held and the absolute absence of a plan to reunite these children with their parents and families.

Separating families by force and punishing children and their families who are fleeing for their lives is immoral, unnecessarily cruel, and violates every science-based child welfare principle to act in the best interests of the child. We refuse to stand by while you systematically harm and traumatize thousands of children. Therefore, we call on the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to cease and desist with your so-called “zero-tolerance” policy and demand that HHS immediately begin reuniting these separated children with their parents. We also insist that you share with us the locations where you are holding these children and allow us and other Members of Congress to visit these locations and check on the conditions and welfare of the children.

Given the severity of the situation, an immediate response is appropriate. We ask that you respond to us with your plan to meet these requests by 12 noon on Tuesday, June 12th. Members of Congress stand ready to take action if these issues are not addressed promptly. Morality and human decency dictate that you reverse these policies and take immediate actions to end the harm you are causing to the children you wrenched from their parents and took into your custody.

Sincerely,

Joseph Crowley, John Lewis, Luis V. Gutiérrez, Wm. Lacy Clay, Pramila Jayapal, Judy Chu, Jan Schakowsky, Raúl M. Grijalva, Adriano Espaillat, Barbara Lee, Al Green, Members of Congress.

HEROIN AND SYNTHETIC DRUG EPIDEMIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as the House considers legislation to address a heroin and synthetic drug epidemic plaguing our country, to honor the memories of two young people from my district: Morgan Brittany Axe, who died from a heroin overdose more than 2½ years ago, and Victor Orlando Woolson, who drowned after using synthetic drugs that he bought over the counter almost 6 years ago.

Morgan and Victor and so many others were touched by this terrible epidemic. Morgan and Victor were both active members of our community and touched the lives of every person they interacted with.

Before she passed away, Morgan worked at the Dewitt Animal Hospital and treated sick and injured animals on a daily basis. Victor was a high-achieving graduate of Mexico High School and was enrolled in Cayuga Community College, where he studied criminal justice and psychology.

Drug addiction is a terrible disease. Morgan became addicted to Xanax after the suicide of her boyfriend. She was just 17 years old at the time. Morgan became dependent on Xanax and needed it to function on a daily basis. She then progressed to other pills in order to numb her pain.

After a long battle with heroin and prescription painkillers, Morgan found the strength of sobriety for 8 months and was on the drug Vivitrol. Vivitrol magically makes it impossible for ad-

dicts to get high on heroin or painkillers.

After she found out that she was pregnant, Morgan went off Vivitrol because she did not want it to harm her child. Unfortunately, post-acute withdrawal set in, and Morgan relapsed.

Morgan did not have to drive to a drug house on Syracuse's west side to buy the bag of heroin that killed her. Instead, a career drug dealer delivered it to her house in Fairmount after cajoling her to use it.

After doing one bag of heroin, Deanna Axe found her daughter lifeless in her bedroom. Morgan overdosed and died, and her unborn child, Isaiah Douglas Lee Mathis, died with her. Morgan's drug dealer, Anthony Vita, was federally prosecuted and is now in prison for the next 15 years. However, Vita being in prison where he belongs, will never bring Morgan back.

Victor Woolson was your average happy-go-lucky teenager who had many friends. He was not only a loyal friend but a loving brother, uncle, and grandson. Victor graduated Mexico High School with an advanced regents diploma and had 4 years in the Marine Corps Junior ROTC program. In college, Victor was contemplating a career in law enforcement while attending Cayuga Community College.

While attending community college, Victor began experimenting with synthetic drugs that he was able to purchase legally over the counter. Because he could buy these substances over the counter, Victor assumed these illicit substances were safe. They were not.

At the young age of 19, Victor went into a shop, bought a packet of K2/Spice over the counter at a head shop in Oswego, New York, suffered a fatal reaction from smoking that synthetic marijuana, and drowned in Lake Ontario.

After Victor's tragic death, his mother, Teresa, channeled her sadness and anger into advocacy and founded the Victor Orlando Woolson Foundation, or the VOW Foundation for short, which advocates for stronger legislation against synthetic drugs and assists individuals and organizations in providing services for mentally ill, homeless, and low-income youth in Oswego County.

It has been my honor to fight alongside Teresa, and this year I invited her to be my guest at the State of the Union in order to highlight the need to address and combat the use of synthetic drugs.

I am proud to fight in memory of Morgan and Victor and so many others, and in this Congress I introduced the Stop the Importation and Trafficking of Synthetic Analogues Act, or SITSA for short.

The SITSA Act modernizes the Controlled Substances Act by speeding up the process of placing synthetic drugs on the controlled substances list. Under current law, drug producers often make minor tweaks to legal substances that mimic the effects of